

Requirements for Mobile Food Units and Push Carts

Information on starting a mobile food unit or push cart operation

City of Jefferson



Department of Planning & Protective Services
Environmental Health Division

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General Requirements for the Operation of a Mobile Food Unit or Pushcart

This information is provided for people who are interested in obtaining a permit to operate a mobile food unit or pushcart in the City of Jefferson. The following guidelines are authorized by the Jefferson City Food Code section 8-104.10. These requirements must be met in order to obtain a valid mobile food unit or pushcart permit.

Pushcarts and mobile units must operate in conjunction with a permitted food-handling establishment, usually referred to as a “commissary”. Restaurants, grocery stores, and convenient stores are examples of commissaries. There must be a written agreement between the commissary and mobile food unit/pushcart operator stating that the commissary may be used to service the mobile unit/pushcart. This documentation must be submitted to the City of Jefferson Environmental Health Division. The mobile unit or pushcart must return daily to the commissary to obtain potable water, empty gray water, and wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils and equipment utilized by the unit. Mobile units water supply and waste units must be self-contained. No hook-ups are allowed to permanent water supplies or sewage waste discharge when in operation. Mobile units cannot be serviced on site. They must return to the commissary for servicing unless part of an event or festival, but not to exceed (14) days.

For mobile units, a potable water hose must be provided and must meet National Sanitation Foundation food-grade specifications, stored in a sanitary manner, and not used for any other purpose. Wastewater must be emptied into approved wastewater facilities. A document stating where employee will utilize restroom facilities will also be required.

The commissary must have adequate facilities to service the mobile unit/pushcart or a health permit will not be issued. Foods that are served by the mobile unit/pushcart **cannot be prepared at home**. All foods must be prepared on site or at the commissary. Leftovers at the end of the day must be discarded.

Specific Requirements for Mobile Food Units

Definition: 1-201.10(B)(55.1) “Mobile Food Unit” a self contained mobile food vending establishment specifically used for preparing, keeping, storing or warming food or beverages for sale by a vendor which is designed for and capable of movement utilizing a motor or motorized vehicle for movement.

Food Code Guidelines:

1. Mobile Food Units must comply with all regulations set forth in the Jefferson City Food Code per 8-104.10.

2. Mobile Food Units and all sundry equipment or items used the Mobile Food Unit must return to the permitted servicing area (commissary) for a minimum of 24 hours at least once every 14 days.
3. Mobile Food Unit vendors **must obtain a business license and permit to sell food** and comply with terms and conditions of the license and permit. Permits are issued on an annual basis. All fees must be paid before a permit is issued.
4. A Mobile Food Unit shall not be issued a permit to sell food from the location it has designated as its servicing area unless the servicing area is a licensed and permitted food service.
5. A Mobile Food Unit shall not be issued a permit for an area zoned residential unless part of a parade permit.
6. A Mobile Food Unit shall not be issued a permit unless the site location identified on its application for a permit is on an established approved parking lot and:
 - a) the location of the mobile unit will not block ingress or egress to the parking lot, and will not block any fire hydrant from use by emergency services, and will not hinder sight of vehicles entering or exiting the parking lot; and
 - b) tables and chairs shall not be placed on the parking lot for customers of mobile food units; and
 - c) the mobile food units use of the parking lot shall not utilized such a number of parking spaces so that a business relying upon that parking lot for the parking requirements found in the zoning code shall fail to have the required number of parking spaces for their business; and
 - d) shall not be within 1000 feet of an active parade permit or festival district without the permission of the permit holder.
7. A Mobile Food Unit may not operate on the city right of way or city owned parking lot unless part of a parade permit.
8. A Mobile Food Unit shall be subject to inspection semi-annually.
9. A Mobile Food Unit shall not be issued a permit unless the parking lot identified Subsection 6-7(f) of these guidelines is the parking lot of an existing, active and permitted business and there are no other Mobile Food Units already permitted to operate upon said parking lot.
10. Any violation of any provision herein shall authorize the Director of Planning and Protective Services to revoke any mobile food unit permit immediately. The Director shall be authorized to enact hearing procedures for any appeal of such revocation.

Sanitation Requirements:

1. A three (3) compartment sink must be provided for the cleaning and sanitizing of utensils and equipment. Sinks must be of adequate size to permit complete immersion of the article being cleaned/sanitized. Adequate clean and soiled utensil storage areas (drain boards or dish carts) must be provided.
2. All mobile food establishments must contain a hand wash sink with hot and cold running water dispensed by means of a combination faucet with soap and paper towels available.
3. Mobile food units must have a potable water tank adequately sized for the intended use of the unit.
4. A wastewater tank must be provided for the catchment of wastewater. The tank must be sized 15% larger than the fresh water tank. The fresh water tank includes the potable water tank and water heater tank. All wastewater shall be removed from the mobile food unit at an approved waste disposal area. The freshwater tank must be kept clean and sanitary.
5. All mobile units must have adequate hot and cold storage for the intended use of unit.
6. Mobile units that contain a grill or a deep fat fryer are recommended to have some type of fire suppression. Please contact the Jefferson City Fire Department for recommendations.
7. The floors, walls, and ceilings of the mobile food unit must be smooth, light colored, non-absorbent, durable, and easily cleanable.
8. The lights in the mobile food unit must be shielded or contain shatterproof type bulbs.
9. All outer openings to an enclosed mobile food unit must be properly screened and/or sealed to protect against the entrance of insects.
10. A metal-stemmed thermometer with a range of 0-220 degrees F. must be available to check hot and cold food temperatures. All potentially hazardous foods shall be maintained at **41 degrees F. or below** or **140 degrees F. or above**.
11. All cold storage units in a mobile food unit must contain a thermometer.
12. Test strips must be available to check the strength of the sanitizer used for sanitizing utensils and to test the strength of the wiping cloth solution.
13. All foods, utensils, and single service items must be stored off the floor.

14. Separate storage must be provided for toxic items and personal items. Toxic items such as cleaners must be separated and not stored above food items, equipment and single service items.
15. All foods shall be obtained from approved sources and shall be handled in a manner so as to be clean, wholesome, and free from adulteration.
16. Only single-service eating and drinking utensils shall be used in serving customers. Single-service items must be properly stored and handled.
17. All garbage and other solid waste shall be stored and disposed of in an approved manner.
18. Employees shall be clean as to their person and food handling practices. Clean outer clothing and hair restraints are required. Gloves or suitable utensils must be used where there is contact with ready to eat foods.
19. Employees who has a communicable or infectious disease that can be transmitted by foods, or who is a carrier of organisms that cause such a disease, or who has a boil, infected wound, or an acute respiratory infection with cough and nasal discharge, shall not work with a mobile unit in any capacity in which there is a likelihood of contaminating food or food contact surfaces, with disease causing organisms or transmitting the illness to other persons.
20. The mobile unit shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition and be free of flies, roaches, rodents, and other vermin.
21. A Health Operating Permit must be posted in a conspicuous manner in view of the consumers.

Specific Requirements for Pushcarts

Definition: 1-201.10(B)(75.1) "Pushcart" a non self propelled wheeled cart, specifically designed and used for keeping, storing, or warming food or beverages for sale by a vendor, which may be moved by one person without the assistance of a motor.

Food Code Guidelines:

1. Pushcarts shall be limited to serving only food prepared at the permitted service area and maintained at proper temperatures.
2. Pushcarts shall be limited to 18 hours of operation per calendar day and must be

returned to the permitted servicing area. This limitation shall not apply if part of parade permit.

3. Pushcarts must be on a sidewalk that is at least 8 feet wide and pushcart can not obstruct free passage of pedestrian or vehicles; the net passable sidewalk shall not be reduced to less than 4 feet 6 inches in width; can not obstruct an entrance or exit, and can not jeopardize public safety; nothing used or stored in conjunction with the pushcart operation shall be placed in the street.
4. Pushcarts must be at least 20 feet from any other pushcart vendor or business that also sells consumable foods. This limitation shall not apply if part of a parade permit.
5. Only food and/or beverages are allowed to be sold on City property.
6. Pushcarts are not allowed in City parks, school yards, cemeteries, or residential neighborhoods. This limitation shall not apply if part of a parade permit.
7. There are no designated areas for any one pushcart vendor-first vendor to a location has the right to conduct business at the location subject to the time limitations set out in the Food Code.
8. Waste receptacles must be provided and may be stored off-cart and shall be in contact with the pushcart at all times of operation and immediate area must be kept free of litter.
9. Dimensions of the Pushcart shall be:
 - Length Minimum 48" Maximum 72"
 - Width Minimum 32" Maximum 40". A box width only, the axle system may protrude an addition 6.5" on each side
 - Height (from ground level) Minimum 36" Maximum 72"Pushcarts licensed prior to 9/1/99 can continue operation if noncompliant with the size limitations, but cannot alter, enlarge or replace the unit except in compliance with these limitations. The City Administrator is authorized to make reasonable rules and regulations governing modifications of the design, construction and location of the Pushcarts in his or her sole discretion.
10. No person shall engage in vending between the hours of 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. This restriction shall not apply if part of a parade permit.
11. Vendors must adhere to all public health and safety regulations imposed by State Law and the Code of the City of Jefferson.
12. It is the applicants responsibility to be familiar with all ordinances relative to the operation of a pushcart.

13. Pushcart vendors are allowed 10 minutes to offload their cart and equipment at the start of the vending day and 10 minutes to load at the termination of the vending day, provided that they do not block the flow of traffic.
14. Failure to adhere to the regulations for Pushcarts units is cause for revocation or suspension of the vendor's license.
15. Pushcart vendors must obtain a business license and permit to sell food and comply with terms and conditions of the license and permit. Permits are issued on an annual basis. All permit fees are due before a permit will be issued.

Sanitation Requirements:

1. A hand washing sink with hot and cold running water, soap, and disposable paper towels are required on push carts.
2. Utensils (tongs, scoops, etc) must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized in a three compartment sink or commercial dishwasher. If pushcart is not equipped with a three compartment sink then extra utensils must be available and changed every two hours during use. Utensils then must be returned to the commissary to be cleaned and sanitized for the next day use.
3. A potable water system must be installed to be used for hand washing. A waste water tank sized 15% larger than the fresh water tank must be available. Potable water must be obtained from the commissary and removal of waste water must be done at the commissary in a sanitary manner.
4. Adequate hot and cold storage units must be available for the storage and holding of potentially hazardous foods. A metal stemmed thermometer reading 0-220 degrees F. must be available to check the temperatures of potentially hazardous foods. Potentially hazardous foods must remain **41 degrees F. or below** for cold holding and **140 degrees F. or above** for hot holding.
5. Each food container on the pushcart shall be equipped with a tight-fitting cover. Covers must be kept closed at all times except when food is being added or removed.
6. Condiments must be provided in single service portions or limited to non-potentially hazardous foods such as catsup and mustard, and must be dispensed from squeeze containers.
7. Customers are not allowed to serve themselves.
8. All containers and food contact surfaces on push cart must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized daily at the commissary.

9. No bare hand contact with ready to eat food is allowed. Single use gloves, tongs, spatulas, or deli tissue must be used to prevent bare hand contact with ready to eat foods.
10. When the pushcart operator desires to sell non-potentially hazardous or pre-packaged foods, facilities will be evaluated on an individual basis.
11. Employees who has a communicable or infectious disease that can be transmitted by foods, or who is a carrier of organisms that cause such a disease, or who has a boil, infected wound, or an acute respiratory infection with cough and nasal discharge, shall not work with a mobile unit in any capacity in which there is a likelihood of contaminating food or food contact surfaces, with disease causing organisms or transmitting the illness to other persons.
12. A Health Operating Permit must be displayed on the pushcart in a conspicuous place in view of the consumer.

If you have any questions, please contact the City of Jefferson Environmental Health Division at 573-634-6410.